SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: I agree with the hon. Member. In the Ministry of Commerce, there is a State cell which is exclusively functioning, to interact with the State Governments. We are monitoring.

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI: Sir, in the written reply, under item (iv), it has been said, "To initiate the process of divestment of following non-core assets.." Here, the Visvesvaraya Iron and Steel Plant, Bhadravati figures. It is the oldest steel plant started by late Sir Visvesvaraya. It was handed over to SAIL with all the assets and with all the conditions put forth by the Central Government and by SAIL; Karnataka Government accepted it. I want to know the details....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Under which Question you are putting your supplementary?

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: We are discussing Q. No. 241.

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI: I am sorry. I thought that we have taken up Q. No. 242.

श्री ओंकार सिंह लखावत: सभापति महोदय, यह जो एक्सपोर्ट प्रमोशन इंडस्ट्रियल पार्क्स की बात माननीय मंत्री जी ने कही है, मैं एक पूरक प्रश्न के द्वारा यह जानना चाहता हूं कि राजस्थान में जहां सर्वाधिक मार्बल के एक्सपोर्ट की मंड़ी है या यों कहना चाहिए कि सर्वाधिक उत्पादन हमारे यहां से होता है, ज्वेलरी का एक्सपोर्ट हमारे यहां से होता है, इसके अलावा हमारे यहां जो गारमेंट है उसका भी सर्वाधिक एक्सपोर्ट होता है, तो आपने राजस्थान के अंदर जो पार्क्स बनाने की बात प्रारम्भ की है वहां पार्क्स का निर्माण हुआ है, तो मैं जानना चाहता हूं कि उसके ऊपर कुल मिलाकर कितना धन खर्च करना प्रस्तावित है, आपका टोटल प्रोजेक्ट कितने का होगा और अब तक सैंक्शन कितने की दी है और शेष राशि कब देंगे?

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: Under the EPIPs, in Rajasthan, there is one district, Sitapura, near Jaipur. It was approved on 28-9 1994. The revised cost is about Rs. 47 crores. The Government has released Rs. 10 crores. So, it is going on.

*242. *[The Questioner (Shri Prem Chand Gupta) was absent. For answer vide page 28 infra.]*

Discussion with British Delegation on Trade

*243. DR. GOPALRAO VITHALRAO PATIL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a high powered British Delegation had, very recently, a detailed discussion on trade with Finance, Commerce, Industry, External Affairs, Power and Law Ministers; and

(b) if so, the details and outcome of the various discussions held, so far?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) and (b) A British delegation led by Mr. Stephen Byers, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry visited India during January 6-12, 2000 to attend the Partnership Summit organised by Confederation of Indian Industry. During the visit, Mr. Stephen Byers called on Union Ministers of Finance, Commerce and Industry, External Affairs, Power and Law, Justice and Company Affairs and exchanged views with them on various aspects of overall bilateral cooperation including trade.

DR. GOPALRAO VITHALRAO PATIL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, Britain is one of our important trade partners. Britain is also one of the important members of the European union. Recently a delegation visited India to promote trade Between Britain and India; and that was headed by the Economic Secretary, Mr. Byers. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether any detailed discussions have taken place. I would also like to know whether any agreements have been signed between the two countries. What are the positive, promotional, steps encouraged?

Trade between India and Britain is very important. Traditionally, we are having trade worth more than Rs. 10,000 crores and it is likely to double in the coming years-which means that it is one of the important trade partners. Therefore, I would like to know what steps are being taken to promote trade between India and Britain.

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: Sir, Britain is the second largest trade partner of India and the third largest investor. It is true that Rt. Hon. Stephen Byres, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, visited India during January 6-12 to attend the Patnership Summit organised by the CII. The visit was used by Rt. Hon. Stepten Byres to have an exchange of views on various issues of bilateral cooperation with us. So, it was a private visit arranged by the CII, Rt. Hon. Stephen Byres made use of it to meet all of us to discuss bilateral and multilateral issues.

DR. GOPALRAO VITHALRAO PATIL: My second query would be this. We export to Britain agricultural products, food processed products, plastics, fish and many other products. But Britain being a part of the European Union, there are non-tariff barriers. They are becoming a hurdle in the trade between, say India and Britain and India and the European Union. For example, in the last few years, when fish was exported, it was found that it contained organisms like 'salmonella' and 'cholera'. Therefore, the consignment was rejected. In Germany, they are having non-tariff barriers. When we export leather which is an important component of our export to Germany, they say that it is being treated chemically and therefore, it is likely to cause cancer. Therefore, there is a ban on such products. The third thing is that there is a ban on some such other things; for example, flowers, fruits. They contain residues of insecticides which are used for the prevention of diseases. Therefore, what is the Government going to do to avoid such non-tariff barriers from our trade and tourism? There is a suspicion about immigrants in Britain. There are also sanctions because of India not signing the NPT as well as not evolving a consensus on the CTBT. Therefore, there are some extraneous factors. So, I would like to know how we are going to promote a better understanding, have increased tourism and avoid non-tariff barriers which are a great barrier for the trade among India, Britain and the European Union.

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: Sir, this non-tariff barriers is totally a different issue. We are taking it up with the European Union and especially in these cases, Britain is supportive of India's attitude within the European Union. Rt. Hon. Stephen Byres, while he was here, while making a speech in the CII, made a reference of all these factors. For example, regarding visas, he has said this. I quote: "In the knowledge-given economy of the future, education and training will be building blocks for economic roads. That is why we have changed our own procedures to make the U.K. more attractive. Indian students coming to Britain can now work full time during their holidays and for up to 20 hours a week during term time. On completion of their studies, they can now stay in the U.K. for up to three years to follow a graduation training programme". This is the announcement made by Rt. Hon. Stephen Byres. This the advantage we have got.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Sir, the Minister is well aware that the Indian foreign trade is in a difficult situation. We are facing an adverse balance of payments. And Britain is an important partner of our foreign trade. Considering the overall situation of adversity of export and import, what steps does the

Government consider to be important to improve our export to different countries, including Britain, so that the adverse balance-of-payments position can be reversed?

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: Sir, recently, exports are looking up, they are increasing. Mr. Stephen Byres has announced that we should put into effect such a plan so that the trade between the U.K. and India is increase by 20 per cent. This is the target he himself has fixed and we shold work together.

SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Sir, though the trade with Britain is still favouring India, in the ultimate analysis, the trade has to go on. But we are having an adverse balance of payment. The point is: "Why can't this be curtailed?" I have learnt that the CII made certain suggestions to the delegation which came to India. Is the Minister aware of those suggestions which the CII have made for improving the trade relations with Britain? Secondly, for granting visa, as you are aware, Sir, that a lot many new ideas have been floated in Britain. Those Indians who want to go to Britain, should submit some sort of guarantee there for 50,000 pounds or so. Is it going to affect the Indian trade? How will the Minister react to it? Thirdly, slowly, some attempts are being made to put non-tariff barriers by the Government in various shapes to favour the European community. How is the Minister contemplating to meet these challenges?

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: Sir, we have an adverse balance of trade with them. But we would like to improve the situation. During the hon. Minister's visit, he has said in the CII that they will initiate global enterprise initiative which will bring together small and medium-sized business from the two countries. So, he has fixed a target of 200 such new partnerships within the next two years. Not only that, the private company will also be entering into some kind of contacts with India. In this context, he has fixed some Indo-British Partnership Business Council to be established, involving ten major global companies. They are Rolls Royce, F.I. Group, British Gas, Glaxo Welcome. JCB Vamp Phone Excavators, British Airways, Powergen, HSBC Holdings, British Telecoms and Smith Kleine Beecham. The main point is to achieve a target of 20 per cent increase in the trade between the two countries. So it is very difficult to say how it will improve, whether it will be plus or minus. So we have to wait and watch. Regarding the point that Britain is demanding some guarantee for Visa, that point has been taken up by any distinguished colleague, the External Affairs Minister, with them.

SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN: Sir, by and large, in the sphere of exports, we are exporting traditional items so far. There may be some new items. But generally, we are exporting the traditional items. But I would like to know whether the Government of India has prepared any special scheme to diversify the products that we are exporting and to export more new items. What concrete programme have the Government of India taken up?

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: Sir, this is good suggestion. our traditional basket of exports should be changed. Our emphasis is to add new items of exports, and probably, computer software will be occupying the largest portion of our exports in future. This is increasing. We have got a lot of scope, and I think, in future, software and services will play a major role in our exports.

Setting up of Industries in Meghalaya

*244. SHRI ONWARD L. NONGTDU: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any proposal from abroad for setting up industries in private, public as well as cooperative sectors in the State of Meghalya under the liberalisation policy;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have invited any foreign company to make investment in the State;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) and (b) Government has received and approved three proposals of foreign direct investment involving foreign direct investment of Rs. 5662.82 lakh in the State of Meghalaya as per the enclosed Statement-I (*See* below)

(c) to (e) The decision of investment in a project with location in a state/ region mainly depends on the commercial judgement of the investor which is guided by various factors like availability of adequate and dependable infrastructure facilities such as power, land, water, law and order situation,